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Series Editors: Fouad Moughrabi and Elia Zureik

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Israel's State Terrorism and Counterinsurgency in the Third World

Jan Nederveen Pieterse *

After a discussion of *state terrorism* and a summary of Israel's record of state terrorism, this paper offers a brief *overview* of Israel's relations with third world countries. The emphasis here is not on Israel's arms sales but on Israel's participation in counterinsurgency and covert operations in third world countries. *Histadrut* has played and still plays a pivotal role in Israel's relations with those countries. Through Histadrut, as early as the 1950s, Isreal served as a 'third country' as part of the ***CIA's international labour strategy***. Israel's contributions to counterinsurgency give a special place to the training of *elite units*. Of importance in interpreting these policies, in addition to Israel's affinity with western imperialism and colonial settler states, is the phenomenon of *frontier fascism* which Israel has cultivated in relation to the occupied territories.

'International terrorism' as an issue began to make its biggest headlines upon the arrival of the Reagan administration. As secretary of state Alexander Haig stated in January, 1981, 'International terrorism will take the place of human rights' as the administration's primary foreign policy concern. With the formation of the senatorial Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism in April, 1981, chaired by the right-wing senator Jeremiah Denton, the preoccupations of the American New Right were formulated as key elements of U.S. foreign policy. The 'struggle against international terrorism' and 'state-sponsored terrorism' became part of the new Reagan format of imperialist management, part of attempts to legitimize U.S. policies in Central America, and to formulate an international platform which could cast the United States and its allies once more in the wonderful role of citadels of civilization. From this moral high ground, communism was equated with terrorism, which in its turn was equated with barbarism. The Reagan approach should in fact be considered as a type of *psyhcological warfare*, in the form of intensive propaganda aimed in the first instance at the American public, and orchestrated by experts in the field. While part of an unreal propaganda war, the rhetoric adopted by western media about 'state terrorism' and 'international terrorism' does have real implications. With regard to Israel and the Middle East, the generalized rhetoric about terrorism strengthens Israel's position in refusing to accept the PLO, a so-called 'terrorist organization,' as a negotiating partner, and in adopting legislation which prohibits Israelis from communicating with the PLO. It helps Israel legitimate acts of repression and aggression as 'preventive counter-terror' measures.

Yet the issue of state terrorism, although intended as a propaganda maneuver, has had the unintended consequence of opening up a debate which in effect exposes some of the

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seamier sides of the status quo. In actual fact, 'state terrorism' is practised more in defence of the status quo, or as an expression thereof, than in resistance to it.[1] Intended to criminalize any opposition or challenge to U.S. hegemony and its variegated ramparts, in effect it exposes the criminal tendencies unleashed in the defence of these ramparts. For it is clear, and becoming clearer, that under the heading of *state terrorism* some very dissimilar phenomena may be grouped together.

(i) The (alleged) activities of Iran, Libya, North Korea, Cuba and Nicaragua, the countries referred to by U.S. President Reagan as a 'confederation of terrorist states,' and 'a new, international version of Murder, Inc.' in a speech in July 1985.[2]

(ii) *Counterinsurgency terror* which is also, and correctly, termed *state terrorism* in the trial of the Argentine juntas. This category includes the activities of the governments of South Africa, El Salvador, Guatemala, Chile, the Philippines, Britain in Northern Ireland, and so forth, as well as Israel's policies in the occupied territories.

(iii) Not usually mentioned in the same class is the *state-sponsored counterrevolutionary terror* of the *contras* in Nicaragua, South Africa in the frontline states, UNITA in Angola and the MNR in Mozambique, and for that matter Israel in Lebanon. While in western media the focus is on the first category — particularly on Shiite terrorism — it is the other categories which are by far the more significant, in terms both of the numbers of people affected, and the frequency and gravity of acts of violence. The case of counterinsurgency state terrorism is particularly significant because it forms part of institutionalized regimes of repression, part of the very status quo, under which violence is being perpetrated under many guises, such as economic violence, usurpation of land and other resources, curtailment of labour rights, and assaults on human dignity. Unlike isolated acts of violence which stand out as 'newsworthy,' this *routine violence* lacks such spectacular qualities.

Hence, central to the debate on state terrorism is the question of ***legitimacy***: if in fact all parties engage in violence, whose violence is legitimate? The definition of 'terrorism' is itself part of a political labelling process. In defining terrorism as illegitimate, unlawful, as deviant behaviour in political relations, the emphasis is on the alleged use of *indiscriminate violence*, violence that affects civilians, innocent third parties. In this framework, the following points arise.

(i) Rarely mentioned in the discussions is the relationship between state terrorism, or violence perpetrated in the name of the status quo, and armed resistance. In most instances groups labelled terrorist can demonstrate that they were first victims of state terrorism and that, accordingly, their actions are a form of *self-defence*. For instance, as Rosemary Sayigh had suggested:

> In understanding the primary place of armed struggle in the consciousness of camp Palestinians, it is also necessary to recall how many times the camps had been targets for Israeli or Arab attack. ... Few peoples have been more systematically kept helpless in the face of attack than the Palestinians, and it is not surprising that the symbol of their resurgence after 1967 was the gun.[3]

(ii) Strikingly absent from discussions also, while a fundamental dimension of the situation, is the related question of the *motive of violence*. Whether the motive is emancipatory or repressive, whether acts are committed in furtherance of progressive changes, such as the right to self-determination or the search for social justice, or are concerned with preserving the status quo is a question rarely asked. By implication the status quo is perceived as legitimate and the motive of the powers that be is not questioned, or at best their methods for defending their interests are questioned. On the other side of the fence, oppressed peoples in search of social justice are by implication denied the right to self-defence, the right to give expression to their frustration, and the right to choose their own allies. The implicit assumption is that they are expected to remain victims of history, sitting ducks for dictatorships, military occupation, and imperialist power plays.

(iii) Given that oppressed people typically are under attack by a state but do not command anything like its resources, their resistance should be regarded as the self-defence of the weak.

This makes some methods of struggle more feasible than others. It does not dispose oppressed groups to engage in indiscriminate violence; rather, the situation compels them, for tactical reasons as well as ideological ones, to be *selective* in their use of violence (except perhaps for an initial state of spontaneous, unorganized violence). The use of indiscriminate violence, in fact, has been characteristic of counter-revolutionary politics (although not exclusively so). Fascist politics has traditionally made use of gangs of thugs and mobs, from Mussolini and Hitler's brown shirts to the landlord armies traditional to Latin American *latifundismo* and the state-coordinated assasination politics of ORDEN and death squads in El Salvador. The use of *terror as a strategy* aimed at people in general formed part of the neofascist *strategy of tension* in Italy, where 'black terrorism' has been expressly indiscriminate (as in the 1980 Bologna train explosion), in line with the stated objective of creating generalized chaos and confusion. In contrast, the anarchist terrorism of the turn of the century was *surgical* by design, targeted at figureheads of the status quo. Many of the contemporary acts labelled 'terrorist' fall within this tradition. In national liberation movements which have had the opportunity to mature in terms of organization and methods of struggle, military operations are the responsibility of the military wing of the organization and are subject to rigorous discipline and considerations of strategy, which rule out 'indiscriminate violence' as a tactic. This applies generally to Umkhonto we Sizwe (ANC), SWAPO, the Salvadoran FMLN, the NPA (Philippines), and the IRA. As Gerry Adams MP stated upon his election as president of Sinn Fein:

> In defending and supporting the right of the Irish people to engage in armed struggle it is important for those

so engaged to be aware of the constant need and obligation they have to continuously examine their tactics and strategies. *Revolutionary force* — and this excludes sectarian violence — *must be controlled and disciplined so that it is clearly seen as a symbol of our people's resistance*. (Dublin, November 1983; emphasis added.)

The preceding describes the norm; it is clear that practice does not always live up to the norm. Still, it is worth noting that, for instance, the bomb explosion at Harrod's store in London in December, 1983 was followed by disciplinary action against the unit involved by the Military Council of the IRA. Likewise, South African casualty figures compiled over a ten-year period designed to compare the number of victims of armed struggle to those of state repression serve as evidence of the ANC's policy of extreme restraint.

This restraint has not been as consistently practiced in the Palestinian struggle, for a variety of reasons including the geographical dispersion of the Palestinians, the existence of various factions within the larger Palestinian movement, and not least the politics of terror practiced by Israel against the Palestinians (described in more detail below). It would be naive to suggest that unnecessary violence or atrocities are never committed by resistance groups. What we can say is that indiscriminate violence is not characteristic of such groups (even though they are routinely labelled 'terrorist'); rather, it is far more commonly used *against* such groups.

Nuance and perspective are all important here; both are lacking in the current, decidedly paranoid environment. It is in misrepresenting facts, obviating nuances and playing on stereotypes that the Reagan initiated debate on 'state-sponsored terrorism' assumes its character of a disinformation operation. As a disinformation campaign it appears to be aimed at manipulating the public agenda, so that instead of the arms race, hunger, social justice, self-determination, or democracy ranking as the *real* issues of global human concern, attempts are made to talk public opinion into a *siege mentality* — a sense of being besieged or encircled by threats from Islamic fundamentalists, Libyan hit-squads, Palestinians, black South Africans, Cubans, and Irish 'terrorists.' In this aspect the theme of 'international terrorism' is a variation on the pattern of the *Red Scare*, or the *Yellow Peril*, the pattern of *imminent danger* recurring whenever the political season permits the anxieties of the extreme right to be presented as the mainstream political agenda. This element is apparent, for instance, in President Reagan's harping on the note of fear in stating of the 'outlaw states': 'Yes, their real goal is to expel America from the world.'[4] This paranoia theme, an undercurrent of the Cold War, is aimed primarily at the American people. It is as if the model of South Africa and Israel — countries that live by a 'siege mentality' and the concomitant national security state — is suggested for the United States, and for the metropolitan world at large. The objectives of such a pose are not hard to guess; they include rallying public opinion behind a 'Fortress America' programme, and in support of militarist policies of interventionism and roll-back, as in Grenada and Central America, while curtailing civil liberties at home.

Part of the ambiance of propaganda is an overwhelming self-righteousness. Witness, for instance, the statement made by Clinton Bailey of Tel Aviv University: 'The danger that terror poses to the West is the ancient challenge of tribal barbarianism to civilization.'[5] In the same vein, is the routine identification of the PLO as 'the forces of violence' in the Middle East. Yet, after the saturation bombings in Lebanon, after Sabra and Chatila, just *who* are the forces of violence in the Middle East? For the sake of the record, it is appropriate to summarize Israel's record in terms of the politics of terror.

The pre-1948 strategy of Haganah, and the terrorist gangs of Stern and Irgun, was that of 'going outside the fence.' From the attack on the King David Hotel to Deir Yassin, the state of Israel was born out of a series of terrorist *faits accomplis*. Jewish militants at the time operated on multiple fronts, against the British mandate forces and against Palestinians. Assasination of dissidents amid Jewish ranks (e.g., Jacob Israel de Haan) was also part of the nation-building effort.

In the 1950s, Israel's *state* terrorism took shape. Indiscriminate violence against civilians was made into a principle of policy in the practice of 'collective punishment' in retaliation for Palestinian acts of resistance. This was also a period of multiple conflicts. Israel's *Sacred Terrorism* also involved attacks in Arab countries, sometimes targeted at Jewish communities so as to prove the point that Jews are nowhere safe and thus encourage emigration to Israel.[6] Moreover, as Moshe Dayan conceded as regards the 'reprisal actions,' they were also undertaken to create a *siege mentality in Israeli society*, regarded useful for reasons of morale. The elite Unit 101, which provided the training ground for Ariel Sharon and founded by Dayan in 1953, was especially formed for such retaliatory strikes. The politics of terror had thus become a developed policy deployed on several fronts, including, particularly in its psychological aspect, in Israel itself. The extent to which the politics of terror and of indiscriminate violence permeated, as well Israel's methods of warfare, came out in a 1979 interview with General (Reserves) Mordechai Gur, following his retirement as Chief of General Staff of the IDF:

> *Gur*: ... The IDF retains two fighter bombers in the air. Someone shoots? They drop bombs. What has come over you? Are you forgetting your history?
> *Q*: Our official military statements always spoke of retaliations against the sources of fire and reprisals waged only against terrorist targets.
> *Gur:* Come on, really... Don't you know that the Jordan Valley was emptied during the War of Attrition?
> *Q*: In other words, when you are talking about a bombardment (by the IDF) you mean we did it indiscriminately?
> *Gur*: I don't have a selective memory. I have been serving in the army for 30 full years. You think I don't know

what we did all those years? What we did along the Suez Canal? We created one and a half million refugees!

Q: Are you saying that the population (of Southern Lebanon) is punishable?

Gur: Certainly. I have never had any doubts about that. ...[7]

After 1967 Israel's transition administration of the West Bank and Gaza showed all the traits of military rule and repression, including the routine use of torture.[8] In the occupied territories, as before in Galilee, a programme of 'Judaization' and 'de-Arabisation' went into effect, implemented by way of development policies and the use of 'pioneer-settlers' armed and trained by the state; over time, this meant in effect the unleashing of the forces of *frontier fascism* on the mob level – a phenomenon to be discussed below.

Another development, in reaction to Palestinian hijackings of airplanes beginning in 1968, was Israeli retaliation against Middle East airlines, and further down the road, the use of Mossad assassination teams to liquidate opponents.[9] These policies found their apotheosis in the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, where the politics of 'collective punishment' were carried to their culmination point in saturation bombings of Lebanese cities and in Israel's sponsorship of the Sabra and Chatila massacre. It is ironic that the invasion was undertaken at a time when the PLO had adhered to a one-year cease-fire and that a London action of the Nidal group – not a part of the PLO – was presented as the pretext for the invasion, whose aims clearly were concerned with undermining the political authority of the PLO rather than with military concerns. In Lebanon, the politics of indiscriminate violence assumed ***Blitzkrieg*** proportions.

Two elements emerge from this summary of Israel's state terrorism. First, we should be aware of the dialectics of terror, in which the *sequence of violence* is a matter of importance: Israeli terror – Palestinian self-defence – and Israeli reprisal actions. In western media, generally speaking, only the last two phases of the entire chain of violence are presented: Palestinian resistance (uniformly labelled 'terrorist') and Israeli reprisals (coded 'counter-terrorism'). Thus Israel's violence is presented as the self-defence of a nation driven against the wall amidst a hostile Arab environment. *Not* discussed is the *initial* Israeli terror, which includes the institutional violence of the denial of Palestinian human rights and the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and all this entails. In a similar fashion, the IRA is broadly labelled terrorist, while British military occupation of Northern Ireland is simply accepted as an exercise in maintaining law and order. Not examined, either, is the question of *proportion* or relative magnitude of the retaliatory violence of Israel as against the violence committed by Palestinians, a matter of importance since all indications are that Israel methodically practices *overkill*, or, in other words, applies politics of terror.

Another element that emerges from this review of Israel's state terrorism is its relationship to Israel's activities in third world countries. Israel's participation in counterinsurgency and covert operations in third world countries has generally reflected the evolution of Israel's state terrorism in the Middle East. How Israel's evolving combat and counterinsurgency experience have been 'internationalized' and disseminated through the third world will be discussed below.

Israel and the third world

In recent years, Israel's activities in third world countries have been attracting more and more attention, attention which so far has largely focussed on Israel's arms sales. In one sense this focus is justifiable since Israel now does rank among the world's top weapons exporters. On the other hand, while arms sales may be the most conspicuous of Israel's overseas ventures, it is not perhaps the most important area to focus on.

Of greater importance is Israel's interventionism: in particular, Israel's *participation in counterinsurgency and covert operations* in third world countries. No one could justify these activities as necessary components of the Israeli economy or as being 'good for business' – a common rationale for the country's arms sales. They can only be accounted for – and even then, only with great difficulty – from the standpoint of ideology. Less conspicuous than arms sales, these activities are morally more questionable.

They are also of much longer standing. While Israel's arms exports date mainly from 1975, Israel's involvement in covert operations and counterinsurgency goes back as far as the 1950s. Moreover, virtually from the outset Israel acted in its relations with third world countries not simply on its own accord but as a conduit, a *third country*, for the United States and several West European countries. In areas such as trade union relations and foreign aid, Israel served, in effect, as a Trojan horse of imperialism in the third world. It is this dimension of 'third country' activities which gives a clearer picture of the extent of Israel's cooperation with imperalism and the history of its relations with third world countries. It accounts in large measure for Israel's actual isolation in the third world. Taking into account that some of these 'third country' services are still being rendered, this exposition also documents some of the earlier stages of Israel's involvement in covert operations, and the role played by Histadrut as well as relations between Histadrut and the CIA.

Israel's involvement in counterinsurgency and its arms sales form part of a broader presence in third world countries. An overview of this presence is given below. This overview is neither systematic nor exhaustive and serves as a basic orientation only.

Overview of Israel's relations with third world countries[10]

Trade Unionism

1950 onward Histadrut-International Conference of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)	Afro-Asian Seminar on Cooperatives (1958-59)

1950s onward Histadrut-AFL-CIO	Afro-Asian Institute of Labour Studies and Cooperatives, Tel Aviv (founded 1960)
1961 onward Histadrut-AIFLD (American Institute for Free Labour Development)	Center for Cooperative and Labour Studies, Tel Aviv

Foreign Aid

Asia: Burma, India, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand
Africa: Ghana, Liberia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, (CAR), Chad, Dahomey, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia
Latin America: Brazil, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Belize (1984)

Economic Relations — Significant and non-military

Africa: South Africa, Zaire, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, CAR, Gabon, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Togo
Latin America: Mexico, Costa Rica, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela
Asia: Taiwan, Singapore

Military Sales — and Training

Africa: Ghana (1957-61), Sierra Leone (1965), Uganda, Ethiopia, South Africa, Cameroon, Zaire, CAR, Chad, Gabon, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Rhodesia, Swaziland
Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela; El Salvador (from 1972), Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua (until 1979), Panama, Belize
Caribbean: Haiti, Dominican Republic
Asia: Burma, Taiwan, Lebanon (Phalange), Iran, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand (since 1976), PR China
(Europe: West Germany, Switzerland, Greece, Rumania, United States)

Counterinsurgency — Assistance, Training, Technology

1950s	Algeria/FLN (with France)
1960s	Congo (with U.S., Belgium); Ethiopia/ELF, the Eritrean Liberation Front (with U.S.); Chad/Frolinat (with France)
1970s	Jordan; Ethiopia/Eritrea; Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau (with Portugal); Rhodesia (1978); South Africa/Namibia; Guatemala; CAR (Operation Barracuda, 1979); Indonesia/East Timor (1979-80); Haiti
1980s	Guatemala; El Salvador; Honduras; Costa Rica/Contras, Border with Nicaragua; Haiti; Bolivia; Sri Lanka/Tamils; Philippines; Puerto Rico; Ethiopia; Zaire/Shaba; Chad (with France, U.S.); Kenya; Malawi

Aid To Secessionists/Factions

1940s	Lebanon/Phalange (1948)
1960s	Katanga/Tshombe; Biafra
1970s	South Sudan/Anya Nya (with Britain); Lebanon/Phalange
1980s	Lebanon/Phalange, Army of SL, Amal; Angola/UNITA; South Sudan; Afghanistan (with U.S.)

Intelligence Relations

Trident Organization (with Turkey and Iran, ca. 1958-79)
(Kilowatt Group with West Germany, Belgium, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Italy, UK, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, France, Ireland, Canada)

The role of Histadrut

Histadrut, Israel's national trade union confederation, was founded in 1920. Its importance to the Israeli economy is immense; presently it is the country's second largest employer (topped only by the state itself), employing almost one-quarter of the country's labour force. Far more than a simple labour federation, it owns or controls a sizable proportion of the country's industry.

The Workers' Company (General Cooperative Company of Workers in the Land of Israel Ltd.) is the holding company for all Histadrut agricultural, marketing, service, and manufacturing companies. In 1979 it controlled 75 percent of all agricultural production, through the Kibbutz and Moshav federations, and 21 percent of total industrial production. Koor, the industrial arm of Histadrut, owns over 100 manufacturing companies, several of which such as Soltam and Tadiran produce military equipment. Major companies such as Solel Boneh, Zim, the Egged and Dan transport companies are all Histadrut enterprises. Bank Hapoalim, Israel's second largest bank, is also part of the Histadrut conglomerate.[11]

In the present context, Histadrut is of importance for two reasons. First, it is the liaison for relations between Israel and the American CIA, especially in the sphere of trade union relations; secondly, the confederation, through its stake in Israel's public sector, continues to maintain a presence in many third world countries, including some which have no formal diplomatic relations with Israel. In this connection, it is interesting to note that Histadrut is a major player in the high technology and military sectors of the Israeli economy and a substantial shareholder in private projects in such repressive countries as Guatemala, El Salvador, and South Africa.

Professedly a progressive organization, Histadrut has long practiced discrimination in its internal affairs. Although Arabs

had been citizens of the country for 18 years, Histadrut admitted Arabs into its union only in 1966. They were then confined to the so-called Arab Department, which was renamed the Integration Department in 1980. This is part of a pattern of discrimination, noticeable in pay rates and job levels for Arabs, in which Israel and Histadrut have been compared with South Africa and the Nationalist Party.[12]

Histadrut and Afro-Asian Relations

Ties between Israel and the Afro-Asian world developed out of contacts established through the labour movement, starting with the International Trade Union Congress in Belgrade in 1950, which led to contacts between Burmese delegates and Histadrut representatives. There were other developments, such as the 1947 Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi; but Israel was not invited to the Second Asian Relations Conference in 1948. Similarly, Israel took part in the Asian Socialist Conference in Rangoon in 1953, but was not invited to the second conference in 1956.

Relations with Burma took the form of Israeli assistance, initially confined to the military sphere, but from 1954 including the training of agricultural, medical and industrial experts who were attached to the Defence Service Industries (the economic branch of Burma's armed forces). The Israeli shipping line Zim took over the management of Burma's Five Star Line, and a giant construction company was set up.

But Israel's relations with Asian countries did not fare well. It was in this area that conflicts between the west and the emerging nations unfolded and Israel repeatedly sided with the west — supporting the United States in relation to Korea, China, and Taiwan. This, in addition to the Palestinian question, was the main factor that led to the exclusion of Israel — despite staunch support on the part of Burma — from the 1955 Bandung conference which founded the Movement of Nonaligned Countries.

After this failure to establish roots in Asia, Israel turned to Africa. Israel's way was paved by Liberia, which had been the third country to recognize Israel. Via Liberia, relations with Ghana developed when it achieved independence in 1957. Already there had been contacts between Israeli and Ghanaian trade unionists in meetings of the International Conference of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). Since Israel had gained access to the Gulf of Aqaba, Africa had become of strategic interest to Israel. In West Africa Israel was looking for port facilities and found them in Accra. Israel also assisted Ghana in setting up the Black Star Shipping Line and the Ghana National Construction Company, as joint ventures with Zim and Solel Boneh, and Ghanaian flight, naval and police academies were likewise established and administered by Israel. From Ghana, particularly after the 1958 All-African Peoples Conference in Accra in which Golda Meir took part, contacts with other African countries followed. These contacts involved trade, joint ventures and aid, notably in the fields of agriculture, trade unions and cooperative organizations, youth organizations and military assistance. It also involved Africans training in Israel (6,623 between 1958 and 1970, nearly half of the total of foreign trainees in Israel from all regions), and Israeli experts sent out to Africa. In all these spheres Histadrut was crucial.

Training of Africans in Israel was focussed on trade union and cooperative leadership. It was Histadrut's International Relations Department that was responsible for training programmes for third world trade unionists, for showing visitors around in Kibbutz and Moshav (cooperative and collective villages), and for organizing seminars such as the Afro-Asian Seminar on Cooperatives (1958-59), 'the pilot project of Histadrut in all its relations with the Third World.' In foreign aid and in economic relations and joint ventures with third world enterprises, Histadrut through its large stake in Israel's public sector again played, and plays, the dominant role.

The CIA international labour strategy

Israel's success in establishing relations with African countries did not escape the attention of other countries. As Arnold Rivkin, head of the Africa Project of MIT, wrote in 1959:

> The Israeli model may well prove to be a sort of economic 'third force' — an alternative differing from the Western pattern, but certainly far more compatible with free-world interests than any communist model.
>
> Israel's role as a third force might also be reinforced by imaginative use of the third country technique. A free world state wishing to enlarge its assistance flow to Africa might channel some part of it through Israel because of Israel's special qualifications and demonstrated acceptability to many African countries.[13]

Accordingly the United States and to a lesser extent European capitalist countries channeled part of their foreign aid through Israel. For the United States the conduit for this *third country technique* was primarily the trade union movement and the relationship between Histadrut and the AFL-CIO and AIFLD.

At the time, trade unions were considered as crucial nationalist power blocks in many developing countries, hence as 'important for outside powers interested in directing the course of the country concerned.'[14] In the United States cooperation between trade unions and government in foreign affairs was a longstanding tradition, and the CIA had already been active in trade union affairs in Italy and France, and in the 1950s, in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Now in the words of George Morris, 'Penetration of African trade unions became a major tactical objective for several reasons... Wage workers, although a minority among Africa's people, were the most dynamic and best organized force in the new order after independence. From their ranks came many leading persons in government.'[15]

Following the completion of his 1957 African tour, U.S. Vice-President Nixon reported to Congress: 'American interests in the future are so great as to justify us in not hesitating even to assist the departure of the colonial powers from Africa. ...It is of vital importance that the American government should closely follow what goes on in the trade union sphere, and that American consular and diplomatic representatives should get to know the trade union leaders of these countries intimately.'[16] Already the CIA had been actively attempting to erode British influence in its African colonies. In Kenya, in 1953 and 1954, it assisted the Mau Mau and helped Tom Mboya organize the Kenya Federation of Labour. In 1956 Tom Mboya was invited to the U.S. In Kampala, a school to train Africans for union leadership was set up mainly with AFL-CIO funds.

British displeasure with American manipulation found expression in a British Cabinet Annexe marked 'for UK EYES ONLY,' dated December 21, 1959. It concluded: 'Americans are not interested in the creation of genuine African trade unions as we know them. America has no Labour Party... As a result, the American trade union leaders like Meany, Reuther, and Dubinsky can afford directly and openly to execute governmental and particularly State Department and CIA policy.' There were then, grounds for the United States to keep as low as possible a profile so as not to embarrass the colonial powers, its European NATO allies. It is also in this context that the 'third country technique' must be understood. The main channel of U.S. influence in the trade union sphere had been the ICFTU, founded in 1949 to compete with the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), which was allegedly under Soviet influence. Israel entered into the picture when in 1960 the Afro-Asian Institute for Labour Studies and Co-operation was set up in Tel Aviv with a $60,000 grant from the AFL-CIO and a further $360,000 in grants in the next two years from the AFL-CIO and the British TUC. The institute was headed by Eliahu Elath, Israel's first ambassador to the United States.

That the international programmes of the AFL-CIO are integrated into the CIA international labour strategy, a strategy geared to training submissive, anticommunist trade union leadership, is clear enough. Israeli training seeks to depoliticize African trade unions by pushing a cooperative orientation rather than an adversarial one based on the class interests of workers. The emphasis, according to Harvard trained labour 'expert' Arnold Zack, 'is on cooperation with other segments of society; comparatively little time is devoted to skills of building trade unions as a power force in the country.'[17]

Subsequently, the Center for Cooperative and Labour Studies was established in Tel Aviv to run courses for Latin American trade unionists, in Israel as well as in Latin America. Supported by the foreign ministry and Histadrut, this Center is sponsored by AIFLD. The role of AIFLD, founded in 1961 in Latin America and the Caribbean, has been extensively documented; it involves the manipulation of trade unions as instruments of destabilization of governments considered hostile to U.S. interests, as in Guyana (1963), Brazil (1964), the Dominican Republic (1965) and Chile (1973).[18]

Israel's trade union connections have continued through the ICFTU network as well as the Tel Aviv Labour institutes. In the 1982 summer course of the Institute for Labour Studies 21 countries which have no diplomatic relations with Israel took part, about half of them being from Africa.

Israel has also been heavily involved with the U.S. in the area of foreign aid. Starting in the '50's, Israelis were given technical assistance training in the U.S. under the Point Four Program of the U.S. Agency for International Development. AID recognized the 'fact that *third country training* can benefit all three partners by strengthening bilateral relations and cultural ties between them.'[19]

From 1961 AID funneled aid to Africa through Israel, making use of the fact that Israel was initially perceived in Africa as a socialist-oriented state. An additional consideration was that by encouraging a 'pro-Israel' attitude in Africa the United States might help undermine Nasser's influence on the continent. No doubt this explains the remarkable feat noted by Leopold Laufer: 'Israel's achievement in having more than half its effort (in development aid) financed from non-Israeli sources is probably unique in the tangled history of postwar technical assistance operations.' Thus France sponsored Israeli youth projects in the Ivory Coast; and Britain and West Germany funded Israeli projects elsewhere in Africa.

Israeli training courses are currently funded by, among others, the U.S. (AID), West Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and France. As well, Histadrut, through its International Relations Department, plays a large part, as does the Labour Party itself, of which Histadrut is an integral part. For instance, Reuven Barkatt, the man responsible for the International Relations Department and organizer of the Afro-Asian seminars in the late fifties, was a leading figure in the Labour Party. Through this party, Israel maintains relations with the Socialist International — a conduit of influence that is of interest to various 'third parties.'

Counterinsurgency

The imaginative use of the third country technique has not been restricted to trade union relations and foreign aid; military training and counterinsurgency assistance have formed part of her overseas activities from an early stage. This also demonstrates that Israel's contributions in the area of counterinsurgency have a logic of their own, a logic which predates Israel's arms exports and which should be examined in its own terms.

It has been argued that 'of all Israel's aid to Africa, military and paramilitary assistance is the most significant.'[20] In this area Israel's contribution was as much integrated into U.S. strategy as were her activities in the sphere of international

labour relations. As the 1969 report of the Africa Research Group observed, 'It is in the area of military and police-intelligence training in Africa that Israel provides its most direct and effective service to imperialism. A large number of programs quietly, often covertly, assist African states in developing counterinsurgency forces and techniques designed to protect neocolonialist governments from being overthrown by their own populations.' This is documented in Sanford Silverburg's study, mentioned in the report, for the American University, *Israel's Military and Para-Military Assistance to Sub-Sahara Africa: A Harbinger for the Role of the Military in Developing States*.

Israel's contributions in this area include assistance in setting up national service youth corps, military training and counterinsurgency assistance, and establishing military, police and intelligence academies or training centers. National service youth corps, some of them paramilitary, were set up with the assistance of Israeli advisors in the following countries: Cameroon, Chad, Dahomey, Gabon, Liberia, Lesotho, Malawi, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Zaire, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Panama, Venezuela. In the area of military training, Israelis assisted in establishing 'an army school for civic action in the Ivory Coast,' a military academy in Sierra Leone, and academies in Ghana. The countries to which Israel has lent intelligence and counterinsurgency support include Ethiopia, Chad, the Congo, and, in more recent years, Rhodesia, South Africa, and Kenya.

The Congo offers a good example of the early integration of Israel in U.S.-coordinated counterinsurgency operations. Here, according to the Africa Research Group report, the U.S. Army ordered a study of *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Magic and Other Psychological Phenomena and Their Implications for Military and Para-Military Activities in the Congo* (1964), conducted by researchers associated with the Centre for Research in Social Systems and its subdivision Counter-Insurgency Information and Analysis Centre, and published by the American University. This study concluded: 'Drawing upon the Belgian experience as well as that of Tshombe in Katanga, it would appear that a more flexible approach to the military problem is to be found in the concept of elite troops: troops which are carefully trained and disciplined and well commanded.' This was of direct relevance to the role Israel played. Given African outrage at the role of the United States in the overthrow of the Stanleyville government, Israel increasingly replaced the United States in the Congo: 'As early as 1963, 243 Congolese paratroopers, including General (now President) Mobutu, were sent to Israel for training. In March 1968, Israeli advisors began training the First Paracommando Battalion, an elite unit which forms the central component of the Congo's counterinsurgency and internal security forces.'[21]

Relations between the CIA and Israel and the Mobutu government have been of an enduring nature. Recent arrangements, agreed upon in 1983, include Israeli national security assistance to Zaire with respect to Shaba province (formerly Katanga) and the establishment of a Presidential Guard for Mobutu.

U.S. intervention in the Congo at the time formed part of a broader effort of confronting the radical alignment of African states led by Kwame Nkrumah, of which Ghana's relationship with Guinea, Mali and Patrice Lumumba formed part. This alignment was broken up when Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup in 1966. The involvement of the CIA in this coup has since been officially confirmed. At the time Nkrumah also charged that Israel had played a pro-Western intelligence role and had had a hand in the coup.[22]

Of particular interest in the Congo episode is the emphasis on *elite troops* as a fundamental counterinsurgency strategy. This calls to mind other instances where Israel has trained elite units in third world armies and highlights a particular symmetry in the structure of Israel's army itself and the U.S. and British military. In Uganda, Israel joined Britain in helping to bring Idi Amin Dada, formerly a corporal in the King's Rifles Regiment, to power, after Amin, as Mobutu before him, had received military training in Israel. In Ethiopia, Israel provided intelligence and military training not only to the government of emperor Haile Selassie but also the Derg, whose pretorian guards – the *nebelbal* (*flamme*) brigade – played a decisive role in bloody purges in the Ethiopian capital in 1977.[23] Since 1984, Israel has been training the Presidential Guard of the Cameroon.

The training of elite troops is not the only *special* contribution of Israel, especially since after 1967 Israel's capabilities have expanded to include West Bank expertise in counterinsurgency methodology. As early as 1981 Shahak reported: 'An especially important item of Israeli export are the so-called 'anti-terror' Israeli specialists. Those are really experts in torture, especially in the more sophisticated methods of torture, such as inflicting the maximum amount of pain without killing. The Israeli 'specialists' who return home, blame very much 'the local torturers' for 'being emotional,' and so 'killing too early' and in their opinion, 'unnecessarily.' Guatemala has become the center of training of torturers by Israeli 'experts' in this trade, for other states as well. The case of El Salvador where the ORDEN people are trained by Israelis in Guatemala has been known for some time, but according to my information, under Sharon, the following other states also sent members of their forces to share in the benefit: Honduras, Haiti and Bolivia.'[24]

Elite troops play a key part in military history. The Pretorian Guard is the proverbial example. In the U.S. Army, despite that force's long-standing suspicion of elite forces,[25] elite units and special Task Forces from the Green Berets to the Delta Force, have come to play an increasingly important role, especially in counterinsurgency operations. This is the special domain of the U.S. Army training center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, which also houses the Army's Psychological War-

fare Center. Here, units like the Salvadorean Atlacatl Brigade have been trained. Another pattern in this context is military training as a prelude to a military coup; an example is former Master Sergeant (now President) Samuel Doe of Liberia, who was part of an elite troop being trained by U.S. Green Berets in counterinsurgency operations in 1979, less than a year before the April, 1980 coup in Liberia.[26]

In the U.S. Army, the development of unconventional warfare is based, in addition to British influence, on the American tradition of frontier warfare.[27] It is the same with the Israeli army. At one time it was Palmach, the elite force of Kibbutz soldiers, in the fifties it was Unit 101 that was regarded as the 'cream of the crop,' and presently the elite forces are combat units and patrol troops. As Israel Shahak has frequently observed, the 'Israeli Defence Force is sharply divided into what is called "elite units" and the rest.'[28] All of these elite units are troops engaged in frontier operations. It is from these elite units of the IDF that Israel's foreign military assistance personnel are usually recruited.

In Israel the prestige of the elite units has long since eroded. A new phenomenon, part of the crisis of morale in the wake of the invasion of Lebanon, is the refusal of reserve soliders to serve in combat units. This may be part of the background of the fairly recent development of Israeli 'Soldiers of Fortune.' Israeli soldiers who served in 'elite units' – in combat in Lebanon, or in 'special operations' – are recruited by international security companies (such as the 'Billionaires Club') to become hired bodyguards for the world's billionaires. They also serve as the personal bodyguards of ex-President Marcos of the Philippines, of the President of Ciskei, of European industrialists, rich farmers in the Philippines, and businessmen in El Salvador, Venezuela and Mexico. Reportedly they also guard the Sun City Casino in Botswana.[29]

Such developments reflect – aside from a relative disenchantment with the military in Israeli society in the wake of the war in Lebanon – the symmetry in the security needs at the higher echelons of power and wealth; both require 'specialized skills.' The subculture of the world's mercenaries is an international subculture, which reveals the proximity of certain types of power to gangsterdom.

If the phenomenon of 'elite units' is now no longer as telling about Israeli society as it once was, it still is an important element of counterinsurgency strategy. It may be interpreted as a further development of the methodology of the national security state, a development according to which the separation between the state and civil society and between the rulers and the ruled becomes increasingly marked and the ring of power more narrowly drawn as the politics of domination become more entrenched. It answers not only the problem of order and discipline, the problem of the containment of insurgency, but also the question, who guards the guards. In the Nazi Reich, Himmler's SS fulfilled this function, their specialized training implying specialized loyalty. Such elite forces identify themselves with the objective of power rather than with the needs of society. If dictatorship and military rule (or state of emergency) are viewed as government by a 'state within a state,' the promotion of elite units may be seen as a further step along the same track, and even, ultimately, as government by a 'state within the state within the state.' Elite units and Special Task Forces represent the square of security, a condition where the state can no longer be entrusted with the security of society; it also implies secrecy, the kind of secrecy which is appropriate to 'special operations.'

Israel and Latin America

In the sixties relations between Israel and Africa began to sour. In 1961, Nkrumah, who had earlier opened the door to Israel, signed the Casablanca declaration condemning Israel as 'a tool in the hands of African colonialism.' This set the pattern for African voting behaviour on subsequent UN resolutions. Israel's own voting record in the United Nations did not help, either. In 1959 Israel voted against holding general elections in Cameroon, against censuring France for exploding a nuclear bomb in the Sahara, and against a Liberian resolution proposing self-rule in the African colonies; in 1960 Israel abstained in the vote for the independence of Tanganyika, Rwanda, and Burundi. In 1965, Israel voted against Algerian independence. The one exception came in 1961 when Israel did vote in favour of sanctions against South Africa which cost Israel its privileged access to South African markets, at a time when South Africa was already Israel's main trading partner in Africa.

In other respects, however, Israel followed uniformly reactionary policies in Africa. Israel supported secessionist movements, siding with Tshombe in relation to Katanga, with Biafra, and supporting, with Britain, the Anya Nya in southern Sudan. Israel sided with the European powers in Africa – with France, later the OAS, in Algeria; in counterinsurgency operations against Frolinat in Chad; and with the United States in the Congo and in Ethiopia. In the seventies Israel (along with the U.S.) backed Portugal in its colonial war against the liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau. As Luis Cabral said: 'I would like to remind you ... that most of the arms of the Portuguese are Israeli...'[30] In the Rhodesian struggle Israel again sided with the white settlers, just as it has been siding with South Africa in relation to Namibia and the frontline states.

As Israel's relations with most African countries deteriorated, her relations with Latin America improved. The latter set of relations dates mainly from the 1962 cooperation agreement with Brazil.

The basic pattern of Israel's relations with Latin America is similar to that of relations with Africa – the central role of Histradut, training in agricultural programmes, youth mobilization programmes, and so forth. Arms sales to Latin America took off in the seventies, largely in conformity with

the pattern of Israel support for the continent's most repressive regimes and their counterinsurgency preoccupations, as with the Nicaragua of Somoza, the Chile of Pinochet, Guatemala, El Salvador, etc.

In 1973, in reaction to Israel's invasion of Egyptian territory, virtually all African nations (with the exception of Malawi, Swaziland, and Lesotho) broke off diplomatic relations with Israel. In Israel at the time there was much talk of 'African ingratitude.' There were comments to the effect that this expression of Afro-Arab solidarity reflected Arab pressure, and indeed there were the usual inuendos regarding Arab oil money.

Yet if we review Israel's relations with Africa, and with Asia and Latin America, a rather different picture emerges. It is not really plausible that the majority of the world's peoples would be so easily swayed by Arab pressure or money, especially when we recognize that Asian and African countries, as Israelis are well aware, have reasons of their own to safeguard their autonomy in relation to Arab or Islamic influence. If we review the record of Israel's relations with third world countries, it becomes apparent that time and again the disrupting factor has been not Arab influence, but Israel's identification with western imperialism.

Presently only two African nations have resumed full diplomatic relations with Israel, while Israel maintains 'interest offices' in eight others. The two are Zaire and Liberia, both ruled by dictatorships. A report in the *International Herald Tribune* noted: 'Israeli military and intelligence support for them has contributed to an image of Israel as a nation whose expertise is sought by African leaders more concerned with personal survival than national prosperity.'[31] It would be possible to go a step further: Zaire and Liberia share a family relationship in that both regimes owe their existence to the United States.

While Israel has been used and continues to be used as a 'third country' by western countries to gain access to third world nations, a reverse pattern has also developed, that of Israel serving as a 'third country' for third world countries to obtain access to western countries. This played a part in Zaire's resumption of diplomatic relations with Israel, based on the hope that Israel would use its influence in the U.S. Congress, which had resisted the plans of the Reagan administration to give financial aid to Zaire on account of its human rights record. It played a part in the decision of Belize to establish relations with Israel: In the words of Bishara Bahbah 'Israel is perceived as capable of influencing the United States, particularly Congress, in helping Belize financially and politically.'[32] Israel performed the same role for the Marcos regime of the Philippines. In addition, Israel is at times viewed as an intermediary to the circles of the IMF.

These are far from the only recorded instances of Israel's serving as a 'third country' for repressive third world countries seeking to gain support in the West. For instance, it is worth noting that the same U.S. public relations firm (Davis Garth and Ze'ev Furst) which helped Israel's Likud party during the 1982 elections has also been hired to improve the public image of the presidents of Zaire and Gabon in the U.S.[33] Such developments suggest that Israel has become an ally not only to western imperialist countries, but also to repressive third world regimes seeking help with 'image problems.'

Frontier fascism

Israel's policies in its relations with third world countries may be accounted for, on the one hand, by specific strategic considerations and on the other, by general tendencies or undercurrents in Israel's foreign policies. With respect to the latter, usually mentioned in this context are Israel's identification with western imperialism and, specifically, Israel's affinity with colonial settler states. Here a third dimension will be added — the concept of frontier fascism.

With regard to strategic considerations, two broad patterns appear to guide Israel's regional operations. (1) Attempts to fragment the Arab world by encouraging factional divisions, and (2) Attempts to prevent the confrontation states from directing their energies against Israel by encouraging conflicts among them and on 'the other side' of their borders. Examples of the latter are the war between Iran and Iraq, and, to an extent, conflicts in the Horn of Africa and in Ethiopia and Sudan. In this regional approach Israel follows the imperial policy of divide-and-rule, particularly along ethnic, religious and political lines.[34] The purpose of such a regional strategy of tension is to destabilize the region by sowing or at least nourishing political confusion.

Another, related basic Israeli policy orientation is to exploit tensions between Islam and Christianity (as between Arabs and non-Arabs) in areas where the two meet face to face. This is notably the case in the Sudanic belt of Africa. Exploiting anti-Arab or anti-Islamic sentiments plays a part in Israel's politics in the Sudan (where they support the southern Sudanese who are black Africans and Christians or adherents of traditional religions, against the Karthoum government), in Ethiopia (where they oppose the Eritrean liberation movement which receives support from Arab sources) and in Chad (opposing northern Moslems supported by Libya). The 'Libya card' plays a part in relations with Liberia, with which Israel has offered to share its intelligence on Libya. In following these lines Israel is treading paths either created or manipulated by earlier imperialist divide-and-rule policies, and Israel's activities in this region are coordinated with the efforts of the current imperialist powers.

The underlying political currents which inspire Israel's *global* policies in relation to third world countries include the following, overlapping elements.

(i) *Identification with western imperialism*. This stems,

among other things, from a historical background of affinity to empire of certain Jewish strata, growing out of the forced role of Jewish communities as alien trading minorities in Europe. The Zionist movement displayed a pronounced identification with imperialist politics. (This is not, I hasten to add, to suggest that Jewish people in general have displayed such an identification; clearly anti-Zionism should not be confused with anti-semitism). Affinity with western imperialism should not mean overlooking the *quid pro quo* to Israel of serving the interests of imperialist countries (United States, Britain, France). Yet in this Realpolitik one senses a deeper undercurrent, one of belief in the imperialist *world view*, that is to say in the *logic of power* as the ultimate arbiter of history.

(ii) *Affinity with colonial settler states*. This is more *specific* than affinity with imperialism in general. It follows from the nature of Israel's state formation, an issue analyzed by Maxime Rodinson.[35] This affinity accounts for Israel's relations with South Africa and Taiwan (as a colonial settler state of mainland Chinese dominating the indigenous population). It accounts for Israel's support of France and the OAS in Algeria, of Portugal in relation to its Afrian colonies, and of the whites in Rhodesia. This affinity also has some bearing on Israel's relations with Guatemala (a society where a Hispanic population is dominating a majority Indian population) and Liberia (a country dominated, until recently, by Americo Liberians and Congoes), two countries which, in parentheses, were among the first to recognize Israel. It has some bearing also on Israel's relationship with the United States, as a European colonial settler state, although this relationship is determined more by U.S. hegemony and its position as the leading western imperialist country. Colonial settler states, at some stage, exist in a state of *dual conflict*: with native people on the one hand and with the metropolitan 'mother country' on the other. Thus Israel is exclusionist *vis-à-vis* Palestinians and, at least during part of the time of its formation, has been in conflict with Britain. This experience of dual conflict has given colonial settler states (or colonial settler movements) a political tradition of a certain, often stubborn and rugged, autonomy which does not quite play by the rules of imperialism.

(iii) *Frontier fascism*. This is a specific way in which the colonial settler experience differs from the imperialist experience in general. In the words of a native American scholar: *the attitude of settlers in colonial regions tends always to be more fascist, racist, and exploitative than are attitudes in the metropolis*.[36] Typical of colonial settler states is a political economy, a culture, and collective psychology premised on the notion of a ***Herrenvolk*** – a master race, dominant by virtue of conquest, and conqueror by virtue of superiority. It is the experience of conquest, reproduced over time as domination, which is lacking in the metropolis. When white South Africans complain of a lack of understanding in the western world about the particular nature of their situation, perhaps this is what they are referring to. The reason why frontier fascism develops, presumably, is that frontier fascist and racist practices pay off, in terms of concrete and immediate rewards lacking in the metropolis. These include material rewards such as land, water, cheap and rightless labour, and a captive market (all obtained at the expense of the indigenous population), as well as psychological and political rewards such as institutionalized confirmation of superior status.

The rightward drift in Israeli society in recent years has given a new actuality to the frontier phenomenon, beyond the basics of the colonial settler state phenomenon. The post-1967 phenomenon of the occupied territories has rekindled the frontier experience, bringing with it settler movements, the rise of Gush Emunim, aggressively fundamentalist Yeshivas, the development of Jewish terror groups such as TNT, the Temple Mount movement, a mushrooming of right-wing religious parties, and as the apotheosis of all this, the rise of the Kach party of Rabbi Kahane.

As Jack Forbes notes, *The use of the religious mob as a political-religious tool must be considered to be a key 'invention' in the rise of proto-fascism*.[37] It is precisely this mob phenomenon that has been on the rise in Israel in recent years, leaving state agencies in an ambivalent position, resulting in their alternating condemnation of settler terrorism with praise for the settlers' courage and determination. State policies in relation to the occupied territories have of course laid the basis for such frontier fascist tendencies as military rule, 'frontier justice,' Judaization development policies, housing subsidies to settlers, the provision of arms and military training given to settler vigilante groups, and political rhetoric in support of the settler movements. The mob phenomenon has developed in conjunction with the spread of religious obscurantism and a hardening of Judaic fundamentalism. Historical parallels abound. As Forbes has noted, 'Christian and Islamic mobs have been used for almost 1500 years, off and on, to destroy rival temples, libraries, schools, sects, et cetera, and to liquidate or intimidate "enemies".' Hebrew theocracy itself represents one of the models of this development: 'Intolerance and bigotry become virtues, signs of piety as it were, in a society geared to the ideal of total and massive obedience to a "divine" law.'[38] For the white superiority complex in South Africa there is a Biblical 'justification' (in the Genesis tale of Ham); in Israel it is the Judaic 'chosen people' complex which turns nationalism into a religious question. The cultivation of exclusivist identity which is held to be so special that its importance overrides the *common humanity* shared with Palestinians, Arabs, and Goyim, forms the ultimate religious justification for the frontier fascist phenomenon.

The concept of frontier fascism may shed light also on Israel's external relations. Israel's expertise is usually called on by other countries in cases involving a frontier of some kind: either an ethnic (or ethno-religious) frontier which presents insurgency problems, or an actual geographic border. Examples include Namibia (the border with Angola), Costa Rica (the border

with Nicaragua), the Shaba province in Zaire, Tamil areas in Sri Lanka, Indians in Guatemala, and several other countries facing ethnic or ethno-religious rebellion. In a number of these cases there has developed a frontier fascism structurally similar to Israel's own.[38]

Israel, or more precisely Israel's elite troops, may thus be considered to be *frontier specialists*. Indeed, some of the counter-insurgency technology exported by Israel is frontier technology, such as electronic fences; and among the counterinsurgency models copied from Israel, for instance in Guatemala, is the pioneer-farmer-soldier combination, which can be used to push a frontier further.

The concept of frontier fascism may also shed light on the relations between Christian fundamentalist groups and Israel. The theological affinities which make for a convergence of fundamentalist Christians and fundamentalist Jews may be familiar enough; they include the peculiar ***Armageddon scenario*** which reserves a special place indeed for Israel in history. There are, however, sociological dimensions which may be more pertinent. One is that a preponderant number of immigrants from the United States have settled in the 'settlement areas' of Galilee and the occupied territories. The second consideration is that Christian fundamentalism in the U.S. Bible Belt itself has developed out of a frontier experience – it was white pioneers with the Bible in one hand and the rifle in the other who stood in the midst of the 19th century Indian Wars. Another, related, form of the frontier experience is found in the slave colonies such as Virginia and South Carolina. Here we find in the 1800s a frontier culture replete with 'lynchings, armed patrols, spying, and distrust of outsiders...' It was society in which 'locally-organized mobs (militia units, irregular or regular) of white males are seemingly an immediate predecessor to the Ku Klux Klan of later years.' In time this frontier fascism spread westward, notes Forbes, 'Oklahoma, after 1907, was a one-party, one-religion (Bible Belt Protestant), racist state where terror and law were both used to maintain white supremacy over coloureds and Indians.'[40]

Currently it is Bible Belt fundamentalism which, next to the Jewish American lobby, is the staunchest base of support for Israel in the United States. These factions are not unrelated,[41] even though Israel may be among the few things they agree on. Politically Christian fundamentalists agree with the American New Right and its tenets of free enterprise, anti-communism, and the New Cold War. In the guise of eschatological theology they defend white supremacy and U.S. hegemony. The Moral Majority represents the theology of Reaganism.[42]

There is an eerie parallel in some of the developments in the United States and Israel; the American New Right has found a counterpart in the Israeli New Right, and moreover, also in the United States we find the phenomenon of *religious mob violence* on the increase: 'Since 1982 there have been 30 bombings or fires in the United States at abortion clinics and offices of those supporting the availability of abortion, including 24 last year. Abortion clinics have also been the target of increasing acts of vandalism, death threats to employees, telephone bomb threats, and other forms of harassment.'

This violence is perpetrated by people who are described as 'religious political fanatics ... ,' 'deeply religious and politically unsophisticated ... ,' 'motivated by their anti-abortion fervor and convinced that they are acting "for the glory of God".' Some are organized in groups with names such as the *Army of God* and operate with the blessing if not the backing of Pro-Life organizations.[43]

In the case of both Bible Belt fanaticism and Gush Emunim/Tehvia/Kach fanaticism, it is clear that to produce it requires many years of indoctrination. It requires a *culture* nourishing and supporting it as a substratum. In parts of rural America as an expression of the same cultural climate and also springing from the historical background of the frontier experience, we encounter racist attacks, armed survivalists, and mercenaries (of *Soldier of Fortune* variety) and their camps. Mercenaries and Christian fundamentalists are aiding the Reagan administration in its policies in Central America and the Caribbean, on the frontiers, so to speak, of the 'American backyard.' Funded and coordinated from the United States, evangelical organizations propagate here their 'anti-liberation theology' of anticommunism and submission to authority.

The same fundamentalist Christian organizations are also active in Israel, maintaining a Christian Embassy in Jerusalem and providing financial support for settlements in the West Bank. Organizations such as High Adventure Ministries Inc. support the Temple Mount Foundation in Israel, which in cooperation with fringe groups such as the Faithful of the Temple collects funds for the construction of the Third Temple, while preparing for the elimination of the Haram-as-Sharif compound mosques, by peaceful means or otherwise. Apparently this particular frontier carries yet deeper historical overtones than other ramparts of U.S. hegemony: it is the frontier which evokes all the memories of militant Christendom, the frontier of the Crusades. The final irony, of this convergence of Christian and Jewish fundamentalists is that Rev Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority, who had been given the Jabotinsky Award by Prime Minister Begin, has stood up, virtually alone among American public figures, in defense of the South African government, in effect in defense of apartheid. Perhaps this is one respect in which Israel is *not* out of tune with the times, in its religious fundamentalism, at a time when there is a resurgence of such fundamentalism North and South.

That Israel established a settler colony at a time when the tide of history is one of decolonization is one of the historical ironies of Israel's position and one of the structural weaknesses

of Israel's third world policies. However much Israel sides with other colonial settler states, time and again it finds that these must yield their privileged position to the tides of change: with the French in Algeria, the Portuguese in Africa, and the Rhodesian whites, time and again Israel has bet on the wrong horse. Israel specializes in backing dictatorships at a time when the strongmen are shaking. Somoza, the Shah, Bokassa, and Amin fell by the wayside and this tide will not pass over Botha, Marcos, Pinochet, Jayawardena. Israel identifies with imperialism but not in its sophisticated economic and financial manifestations: the imperialism that Israel identifies with is the old imperialism of geography and frontiers, the imperialism of intervention and roll-back, imperialism in its crudest, most primitive form. The result is that Israel is becoming a mercenary state and the frontiers it is called upon to guard are frontiers of the past, frontiers of reaction: 'Israeli society as a whole, profits more and more from the blood of freedom fighters.'[44]

From the point of view of geopolitics the increase in Israel's interventions in third world countries occurs at the intersection of several developments: on the one hand the long term pattern of increasing threats to U.S. hegemony, on the other the post-Vietnam trauma in the United States in combination with the unsuccessful experiences with 'regional gendarmes.' The revolution in Iran and more generally contradictions developing, notably in the economic sphere, between the United States and 'regional influentials' have caused the U.S. to look elsewhere for surrogate forces. This has paved the way for quantitative and qualitative increases in Israel's involvement in counterinsurgency operations. It has created a niche for a new phenomenon on the geopolitical horizon — the mercenary state, or perhaps more accurately, the quasi-mercenary state. While the need for Israeli assistance is likely to increase, its acceptability is likely to decrease. An example is the intense political backlash which has come in the wake of Israel's involvement in Sri Lanka. Another point is that the United States cannot afford to be too openly associated with Israel's state terrorist escapades conducted on its own behalf.

Israel has established a state founded on Zionism at a time when ethno-nationalism and racism have been coming under attack throughout the world. That Israel is chronically behind the times, in everything but military achievement, is nowhere as evident as in its alliance with South Africa. The present irreversible momentum of the anti-apartheid movement, in South Africa and abroad, places Israel in an embarrassing position. When major American Jewish organizations have spoken out against South African repression and Jewish leaders have been arrested picketing the South African Embassy in Washington, the situation created is one of collision between Israel's strongest outside base of support and Israel's closest ally (aside from the United States). In Israel this has led to a meeting of Prime Minister Peres and Gathsa Buthelezi of Inkatha, a marginal and compromised figure, and a promise that Israel would use its influence in South Africa to bring an end to apartheid. But this comes nowhere near addressing the root problem: the uncanny symmetry of South Africa and Israeli apartheid practices in the occupied territories. Just as the South African government refuses to talk with the ANC and arrests leaders of the UDF, Israel refuses talks with the PLO and detains or deports PLO representatives in the occupied territories. The rationale in both instances is 'We do not talk to terrorists,' the reality in both instances is the denial of the majority voice and the violent repression of the majority logic of the people in the region. The current crisis in South Africa is likely to reverberate to all the metropolitan centers that have supported South Africa, and through them, to Israel. The dilemmas this creates and the hypocrisy it exposes are reflected already in the American press.[45] Another of Israel's settler colonial allies is beginning to crumble.

Notes

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3 Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries*, London: Zed Press, 1979, 253-4.
4 See note 2.
5 IHT, 2, July 1985.
6 Livia Rokach, *Israel's Sacred Terrorism,* Belmont, Ma.: American Arab University Graduates (AAUG), 1980; Vincent Monteil, *Dossier secret sur Israel - le terrorisme,* Paris: Guy Authier, 1978.
7 *Al Hamishmar*, 10, May 1979, Translated in Israel Shahak Papers, *Collection: Israeli War Crimes and Atrocities, 1948-79*, Jerusalem, (mimeographed).
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